

VILLAGE PROFILES

Richard Flower—a senior who thinks young

Richard Flower is a current member of the Board of Directors of the Carmel Residents Association. This interview was conducted by both e-mail and phone. However, we have been promised a glass of excellent wine the next time we meet in person. We're looking forward to that meeting.

What brought you to Carmel? I understand you were brought up in Napa—that's a nice place to call home.

My love affair with Carmel began with my first visit in 1942. I have over the years developed respect for this village's history of treasuring and protecting its matchless environment and unique character. A part-time resident since purchasing a home here in 1996, I became a full-time resident following my wife's death four years ago. As to Napa, I feel it's a city which has recklessly squandered its resources in largely unsuccessful efforts toward immediate economic gain—certainly and thankfully something Carmel has not done.

You're from academia, on the faculty of the University of California, San Francisco. May we know your specialization; your field?

Speech pathology and audiology—the field devoted to the education and rehabilitation of children and adults with speech, language and hearing disorders. My faculty appointment was in the department of otolaryngology—put in simple terms, ear, nose and throat.

What is your connection with Harrison Library? You seem to spend a great deal of time there.

Some of my most rewarding hours are spent as a volunteer in the Local History Department. The experience has given me an even more profound appreciation and understanding of what truly distinguishes Carmel, and of the perspectives and principles which guided it through the Twentieth Century. And ... I love research.

In an earlier conversation (was it a quiet moment at a CRA Board meeting?) you alluded to another of your volunteer assignments. Was it The Center for Change in Monterey?

It was and is. Our major activities have



Richard "Dick" Flower is a retired U.C. San Francisco professor and an active member of the CRA Board of Directors.

been related to building local support for health care reform. My years of experience directing a clinical services program in a large comprehensive medical center gives me a thorough understanding of the monstrous waste, inefficiency, and unfairness of America's health care system. To some extent, national failures can be mitigated by local level creativity. I'm pleased to say that some promising ideas are coming forward in Monterey County.

As a confirmed Carmelite, what are your thoughts on the politics of this village? Of course, some would say everything is political. But where do you think Carmel is going—right, left, unchanged, constant?

I am concerned about the erosion for preserving the fundamental values that have guided Carmel. Those of us who share that concern are not just impractical "tree-huggers." We must always remember the economic health of our village depends on maintaining the uniqueness that keeps us one of America's most popular destinations for visitors. Furthermore, preservation is essential to maintaining the value of the property we own.

What is it you see in this community that gives you the most hope for the future of a tiny little village on the Pacific Coast? What could you point to as a positive indication of sustaining "the good life" here, now and in the future?

As an incurable optimist, I am heartened by at least one development. Two bright, superbly educated, young people, who have already highly productive careers, have declared an interest in participating in the Carmel city government. Having been privileged to spend my career on university campuses among talented and accomplished young people, I learned that experience alone is no substitute for their imagination and creativity. We should also remember that Carmel's unique history was initiated by young people. Although senior among them, Frank Devendorf was only in his mid-forties; trendsetters like George Sterling, Gertrude Ather-ton, Mary Austin, James Hopper, and Jack London were all in their thirties. Even though I have qualified as a senior citizen for more than twenty years, I would revel in a return to their spirit and vision.

by Tom Parks

For more than twenty-five years, Tom Parks was a dialogue coach for many of the biggest names in Hollywood—Bob Hope, Carol Burnett, Julie Andrews, and the cast of *Laugh In*, to name a few. He moved to Carmel 25 years ago and has since written, directed and performed in several plays and revues to broad critical acclaim and the delight of local audiences. He serves as a board member of the Carmel Residents Association, the Carmel Public Library Foundation and the Alliance on Aging.